Stereochemistry of Nucleophilic Reductions of 2-Methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanones. Further Support for the Linear Combination of SSC and PSC Stereochemical Models

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trans-2-Methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone reacts with lithium aluminum hydride, lithium trimethoxyaluminum hydride and methyl-lithium with equal stereoselectivity of axial attack (*i.e.* 95 ± 1%). This is attributed to the equal steric strain control (SSC) of these three reagents in the absence of product stability control (PSC) brought about by the equal stability of its two secondary alcohol products (*i.e.* $\Delta G^\circ = 0$ and $\Delta\pi = a\Delta G^\circ = 0$).

Also presented for comparison are the stereochemistries of the reactions of 4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone, 2-methylcyclohexanone, *cis*-2-methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone and 2,2-dimethyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone. In these three systems, the stereochemical courses of addition are controlled by SSC($\Delta\delta$) and PSC($\Delta\pi$) simultaneously, *i.e.* $\Delta(\Delta G^\ddagger) = \Delta\delta + \Delta\pi$.

Numerous proposals have been advanced to rationalize the preferential formation of equatorial alcohols from reduction by various metal hydrides of simple cyclohexanone derivatives.¹⁻⁵ Thus, according to Cherest and Felkin,¹ the formation of equatorial alcohol from axial attack of nucleophile is preferred in order to avoid torsional strain between the nucleophile and the two equatorial C-H bonds at C-2 and C-6. Likewise, Anh² emphasizes the greater stability of the axial transition state by the δ^* antibonding interaction with the two axial C-H bonds at C-2 and C-6. Cieplak, on the other hand, proposes an alternative model to account for the lower energetic barrier of the axial transition state which leads to the preferential formation of equatorial alcohol.³ According to Cieplak's model, the stereochemistry of the nucleophilic reduction† is primarily determined in the bond-forming process and the axial transition state leading to formation of equatorial OH is more stable because of interaction with the neighbouring occupied orbitals.

Although rapid advancement in computer technology makes MO calculation more convenient,^{3,4} lack of a precise characterization of the transition-state complex still hampers the practical usage of this approach for a quantitative assertion of the stereochemistry of the nucleophilic reduction of cyclic ketones.

Following our earlier postulations that stereochemical courses of nucleophilic reduction of ketones are determined by two competing factors, steric strain control (SSC) and product stability control (PSC),^{6,7} we have proposed that the actual transition-state complex is neither purely reactant-like nor purely product-like but is between these two extremes. In the past five years, we have advanced a linear combination of SSC and PSC models for the rationalization and prediction of the stereochemical courses of nucleophilic reductions of various cyclic ketones including open and crowded cyclopentanone, cyclohexanone and norbornanone derivatives.⁸

According to this model, the energy difference between two epimeric transition states, $\Delta(\Delta G^\ddagger)$, can be calculated from the magnitudes of SSC and PSC making the following assumptions.

(a) The transition-state complex can be visualized as being composed of two hypothetical extremes, reactant-like and product-like, with the energy difference $\Delta(\Delta G^\ddagger)$ equal to $\Delta\delta + \Delta\pi$. (b) The energy difference of the two epimeric product-like transition-state complexes can be estimated from $\Delta\pi = a\Delta G^\circ$ where ΔG° is the thermodynamic difference of product stabilities and a is a constant related to the reducing agent. (c) $\Delta\delta$, The energy difference in SSC, would roughly equal $\Delta(\Delta G^\ddagger)$ in the reaction of methyl-lithium with the ketone, since the two epimeric product-like transition-state complexes are to have equal stability ($\Delta\pi = 0$) presuming the size of *O*-metal group is similar to that of methyl group. (d) Common reducing reagents such as lithium aluminium hydride (LAH) in THF solution, lithium trimethoxyaluminium hydride (LTMAH) in THF and methyl lithium (MeLi) in ether are equally stereospecific when only the reactant-like transition states are considered, *i.e.* $\Delta\delta_{\text{LAH}} = \Delta\delta_{\text{LTMAH}} = \Delta\delta_{\text{MeLi}}$. The third assumption is justified in view of the observations that many methyl carbinols in cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, bicyclo[2.2.1]heptyl, and bicyclo[3.3.1]nonyl systems show only small differences in stability in equilibration experiments with acid.⁹ The fourth assumption is made from comparisons of the stereospecificity of reduction of two ketones of roughly equal magnitudes of $\Delta\pi$.^{8a}

Of the thirteen cyclic ketones we have successfully determined that,^{8a,b} the two controlling factors $\Delta\delta$ and $\Delta\pi$ always act simultaneously on the stereochemical course of hydride reductions (LAH and LTMAH). In all of these systems, $\Delta\delta$ and $\Delta G^\circ_{\text{H}} \neq 0$; clear-cut tests for the above assumptions, particularly the last two, are not possible. However, in the current system, the nucleophilic reduction of *trans*-2-methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone, *trans*-(3), possesses a unique property in which the two alcoholic products have equal stabilities, $\Delta G^\circ = 0$, according to Sicher and Tichy.¹⁰ Where $\Delta G^\circ = 0$, the effect of PSC can, therefore, be neglected for reactions with LAH, LTMAH, and MeLi. In other words, *trans*-(3) will react with LAH, LTMAH, and MeLi with equal stereospecificity under the control of sole factor, $\Delta\delta$. Consequently, the above assumptions can be checked with this system. In this paper the stereochemistries of nucleophilic reductions of *trans*-(3) are given and compared with those of 4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone, (1), 2-methylcyclohexanone, (2), *cis*-2-methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone, *cis*-(3), and 2,2-dimethyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone (4).

† Throughout this paper 'nucleophilic reduction or addition' will be used to represent the formation of alcohol product from reduction of ketone by lithium aluminium hydride, or lithium trimethoxyaluminium hydride or by the addition of methyl-lithium.

Stereoselectivity of LAH reductions $[\Delta(\Delta G^\ddagger)]_{\text{LAH}}$ increases

Table 2. Paramagnetic shifts^a of *cis*- and *trans*-(6).

Eu(fod) ₃ /ROH (mol %)	<i>cis</i> -(6)						<i>trans</i> -(6)					
	4-CMe ₃		2-Me		1-Me		4-CMe ₃		2-Me		1-Me	
	δ	$\Delta\delta$	δ	$\Delta\delta$	δ	$\Delta\delta$	δ	$\Delta\delta$	δ	$\Delta\delta$	δ	$\Delta\delta$
0	0.85	0	0.95	0	1.14	0	0.84	0	1.02	0	1.28	0
0.86	0.85	0	0.97	0.02	1.19	0.05	0.84	0	1.03	0.01	1.28	0
1.82	0.87	0.02	1.01	0.06	1.29	0.15	0.85	0.01	1.12	0.10	1.39	0.11
2.90	0.88	0.04	1.06	0.11	1.42	0.28	0.88	0.04	1.23	0.21	1.51	0.23
4.10	0.92	0.07	1.16	0.21	1.66	0.52	0.91	0.07	1.36	0.34	1.67	0.38
7.02	0.96	0.11	1.29	0.34	1.98	0.84	0.95	0.11	1.62	0.60	1.99	0.71
<i>S</i> ^b /ppm	1.52		4.73		11.6		1.58		8.12		9.43	

^a JEOL JNM-FX100 (100 MHz) in CDCl₃. ^b Paramagnetic shift value *S* is defined as $\Delta(\Delta\delta)/[\text{Eu(fod)}_3/\text{ROH}]$ by plotting $\Delta\delta$ against Eu(fod)₃/ROH. The values listed above are obtained from least-square plots using the package obtained from StatWorks of Heyden & Son, Inc.

Table 3. Stereochemistry of the reactions of cyclohexanones with LAH, LTMAH, and MeLi at 0 °C.

Ketones	<i>trans</i> -ROH ^{a,b} (mol %)			$\Delta(\Delta G^\ddagger)/\text{kcal mol}^{-1}$			$\Delta G^\circ/\text{kcal mol}^{-1}$	$\Delta\delta/\text{kcal mol}^{-1}$	$\Delta\pi/\text{kcal mol}^{-1}$	
	LAH	LTMAH	MeLi	LAH	LTMAH	MeLi			LAH	LTMAH
(1)	89	58	35	1.1	0.2	-0.3	0.9	-0.3	1.45	0.5
(2)	75	31	16	0.6	-0.4	-0.9	1.15	-0.9	1.5	0.5
<i>cis</i> -(3)	81	32	16	0.8	-0.4	-0.9	1.2 ^c	-0.9	1.7	0.5
<i>trans</i> -(3)	95	94	96	1.6	1.5	1.7	0	1.6 ± 0.1	0	0
(4)	96	80	78	1.7	0.75	0.7	0.58 ^d	0.7	1.0	0.1

^a The 4-*t*-butyl group in the equatorial position is used as a reference group; therefore, *trans*-ROH has an equatorial OH group. ^b Data are taken from ref. 8(c), except those for *cis*-(3) and *trans*-(3). ^c Calculated from average of 1.21 kcal mol⁻¹ of $\Delta G_H = \Delta\pi_{\text{LAH}}/1.4$ and of 1.23 kcal mol⁻¹ of $\Delta G_H = \Delta\pi_{\text{LTMAH}}/0.4$. ^d Average of two literature values, 0.87 (J. Sicher and J. Zavada, *Collect. Czech. Chem. Commun.*, 1967, 32, 2122) and 0.28 kcal mol⁻¹ (J.-C. Richer and G. Perrault, *Can. J. Chem.*, 1965, 43, 18).

from (1), (2), *cis*-(3) to *trans*-(3) and (4); this trend cannot be readily explained by the torsional-strain control.¹ Similarly, torsional-strain control also fails to provide a consistent explanation for the observed stereochemical changes of these ketones in reactions with LTMAH or MeLi.

A shift of transition state co-ordinate from a product-like one to a reactant-like one in this series is unlikely because of the preservation of structural homogeneity of the carbonyl group in these ketones and the use of identical reaction conditions. Were this the case, similar increases in stereoselectivities should also be observed in their reactions with LTMAH and with MeLi. Likewise, these two rationalizations give unsatisfactory explanations for the observed variation in the stereochemical courses of LAH, LTMAH, and MeLi reactions with *trans*-(3) or (4).

With the linear combination of the SSC and PSC models, the observed change in stereoselectivity can be readily attributed to the varying degree of contributions of SSC ($\Delta\delta$) and PSC ($\Delta\pi$) including the case for $\Delta\pi = 0$ in *trans*-(3) and the reactions of MeLi with various ketones. Not only does this model provide a satisfactory explanation, qualitative as well as quantitative, for these cyclohexyl system, it also offers a universal rationalization for the observed stereochemistries in cyclopentyl and bicyclic systems for all the three reducing reagents.⁸

In conclusion, the data obtained from *trans*-(3) strongly support the steric strain controlling effect ($\Delta\delta$) of LAH, LTMAH, and MeLi can be viewed as equal in magnitude and that $\Delta(\Delta G^\ddagger)_{\text{Me}} = \Delta\delta$ is a valid assumption. Finally, the observed variation in the stereoselectivities of the reductions of cyclic ketones are best treated qualitatively and quantitatively with $\Delta(\Delta G^\ddagger)_H = \Delta(\Delta G^\ddagger)_{\text{Me}} + a\Delta G^\circ_H$ ($a = 1.4$ for LAH and 0.4 for LTMAH).

Experimental

Preparation of *trans*-2-Methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone, *trans*-(3).—A solution of lithium di-isopropylamide (LDA) (0.33 mol dm⁻³) was prepared under a nitrogen atmosphere by the addition of BuLi [60 mmol, 1.6 mol dm⁻³ in hexane (Merck)], to a solution of di-isopropylamine (65 mmol) in dry THF (140 cm³) at 0 °C. A solution of the *N,N*-dimethylhydrazone of (1) (50 mmol) was added dropwise to the LDA solution. After being stirred for 3 h at 0 °C, the resulting yellow solution was cooled to -78 °C, iodomethane (65 mmol) was added and then the mixture was warmed to room temperature and stirred overnight. The volatiles were removed under reduced pressure, the residue was taken up in ether, and washed successively with aqueous sodium thiosulphate and brine. After being dried (Na₂SO₄), the organic phase was concentrated to give a crude product (7.9 g) of the *N,N*-dimethylhydrazone of *trans*-2-methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone.¹³

The crude oil was treated with a solution of copper(II) chloride (110 mmol) in a mixture of THF (180 cm³) and water (90 cm³) at 0 °C for 4 h. After removal of volatiles, the residue was extracted twice with ether. The combined extracts were washed with brine, dried (Na₂SO₄), filtered and concentrated under reduced pressure. After distillation (52 °C/0.4 mmHg), 2-methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone (41 mmol) was obtained as a mixture of *trans*- and *cis*-isomers (65:35). Separation of the two isomers was performed by h.p.l.c. [0.78 × 25 cm μ -Porasil column with EtOAc-hexane (7:93 v/v); 5.2 cm³ min⁻¹]: *cis*-(3),¹⁶ $t_R = 3.60$ min, $\delta_H(\text{CDCl}_3)$ 0.90 (9 H, s, CMe₃), 0.97 (3 H, d, *J* 6.5 Hz, 2-Me), 1.35–1.75 (5 H, m), and 1.90–2.46 (3 H, m); *trans*-(3),¹⁶ $t_R = 4.24$ min, $\delta_H(\text{CDCl}_3)$ 0.90 (9 H, s, CMe₃), 1.12 (3 H, d, *J* 7.0 Hz, 2-Me), 1.40–2.80 (5 H, m), and 2.24–2.60 (3 H, m).

Reduction of trans-2-Methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone with LAH.—To a cold suspension of LAH (5 mmol in 30 cm³ of THF) was added dropwise a solution of *trans*-(3) (10 mmol in 5 cm³ THF) at 0 °C. After being stirred for 1 h, the mixture was quenched with saturated ammonium chloride. The mixture was filtered and rinsed with ethyl acetate. Removal of the solvent afforded the alcoholic products, *cis*- and *trans*-(5) (5:95) (9.5 mmol). The two epimers were separated by h.p.l.c. [eluant: EtOAc–hexane (1:9 v/v)]: *cis*-(5), $t_R = 7.53$ min, colourless crystals, m.p. 70–71 °C (lit.,¹⁷ 70–71 °C), $\delta_H(\text{CDCl}_3)$ 0.83 (9 H, s, CMe₃), 0.94 (3 H, d, J 7.0 Hz, 2-Me), 1.05–1.85 (8 H, m), and 3.55–3.72 (1 H, $w_{1/2}$ 6 Hz); *trans*-(5), $t_R = 8.63$ min, colourless crystals, m.p. 64–65 °C (lit.,¹⁷ 60–62 °C), $\delta_H(\text{CDCl}_3)$ 0.80 (9 H, s, CMe₃), 0.90 (3 H, d, J 7.0 Hz, 2-Me), 1.05–1.85 (8 H, m), and 3.50–3.78 (1 H, $w_{1/2}$ 18 Hz).

Addition of trans-2-Methyl-4-*t*-butylcyclohexanone with Methyl-lithium.—To a cold solution of *trans*-(3) (10 mmol in 15 cm³ ether) was added dropwise a solution of MeLi in ether (15 mmol, 1.6 mol dm⁻³ Merck) at 0 °C. After stirring for 3 h at 0 °C, the reaction was terminated with saturated ammonium chloride. The organic layer was washed with brine, dried (Na₂SO₄), and concentrated to give the alcohol products *cis*- and *trans*-(6) (4:96) (7.5 mmol). The stereoisomers were separated by h.p.l.c. [eluant: EtOAc–hexane (1:19)]: *cis*-(6), $t_R = 10.4$ min, liquid, $\delta_H(\text{CDCl}_3)$ 0.85 (9 H, s, CMe₃), 0.95 (3 H, d, J 7.0 Hz, 2-Me), 1.14 (3 H, s, 1-Me), and 1.20–1.48 (8 H, m); *trans*-(6), $t_R = 14.5$ min, pale yellow crystal, m.p. 69–70 °C (lit.,¹⁹ 67.5 °C), $\delta_H(\text{CDCl}_3)$ 0.84 (9 H, s, CMe₃), 1.02 (3 H, d, J 7.0 Hz, 2-Me), 1.28 (3 H, s, 1-Me), and 1.36–1.59 (8 H, m).

Acknowledgements

Financial support from the National Science Council and the Union Chemical Laboratory are gratefully acknowledged.

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Received 27th June 1988; Paper 8/02521E